

corporations there, but it brought her into my life so many years ago. There, she was a light as well, interested in helping and befriending not only my husband and myself, but my two little ones, Erica and Jason. Boy, did they have a buddy in Kathi Wilkes. She loved to do things that children much smaller and much younger than herself enjoyed. She was just a fun-loving person. Then, of course, she traveled to places around the world embracing friends.

As she came back to Washington, D.C., to become the chief of staff in the 18th Congressional District, what a light she was in the office, bringing in great talent and other young people who were nurtured, counseled by her, tutored, and made great. Then, of course, what a partner in legislation. She was there through the ups and downs of the 1990s, through the impeachment proceedings, as I was a member of the House Judiciary Committee. Through all these tough times, Kathi was there.

Then we were able to do something quite great, if I might say so myself. This House was built by slaves, the Capitol of the United States of America. But as we looked around a few years past, there were no statues of African Americans, less an African American woman. I passed legislation, along with then-Senator Clinton, to place a statue of Sojourner Truth in this House. Sojourner Truth was a person who had been an abolitionist, a suffragette, a slave, a mother of 13 children, who had seen most all of them sold into slavery.

Kathi worked without ceasing to ensure that that statue was sculpted, that we had the opportunity to place it historically in the United States Congress, and it was honored with 2,000 people coming to see the placement of the Sojourner Truth statue having then-Secretary Hillary Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama and, of course, the Speaker, NANCY PELOSI, present. What a wonderful day and occasion and tribute to the hard work of Kathi Wilkes.

It is befitting that I rise today to express the deep pain that so many of us feel, friends from all around the world even, but certainly in this Nation. Friends, as I said from Ohio, to Pennsylvania, to Washington, D.C., to Texas, many of whom will be able to come today, others of whom will celebrate her in Houston and in Ohio. One may ask why she is deserving of such. In the backdrop of such terrible tragedies that have faced us in Aurora and places around the world, as we mourn the loss of so many in the occurrence of last Thursday, I stand here today to say that I know that if Kathi Wilkes were alive today, she would be somewhere trying to help, to nurture, to assist my office, to be of help, even as she is no longer a chief of staff, but really a former chief of staff.

That is simply the way Kathi Wilkes is to her mother, her son, and, of

course, her granddaughter and her many relatives and many friends. We have lost a good friend, but I can see her now taking wings.

Farewell, my good friend. You have served well and made us proud. More importantly, you have given of yourself. May you rest in peace.

□ 1020

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, I had the privilege to speak to well over 200 retirees. Many of the retirees are veterans of our previous wars for this country. They wanted me to be there with them to discuss sequestration, their benefits, and what do I think is going to happen, which I could not honestly tell them. And none of us really seem to know until we get back after the election in November.

But, Mr. Speaker, when I spoke to this group of retirees, I took this poster down, and I had it on a stand like this one. It says: "Funding the Enemy: How U.S. Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban." And I told these veterans that it was time to get our troops out of Afghanistan. It was time to stop sending money to a corrupt leader named Karzai and time to bring the troops home and spend the money here in America on our own people and guarantee the benefits for our veterans, which they have earned.

Mr. Speaker, I got a strong applause from those people, who have served this Nation, and their spouses. This took place in Jacksonville, North Carolina, which is in my district. The Camp LeJeune Marine base is in my district. And many of these in attendance served in the Marine Corps, the Navy, a few in the Air Force. And they agree with me, it is time to stop spending money, digging a hole that has no end to it, known as Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, in a critique on this book, "Funding the Enemy," I read one of the most candid behind-the-scenes examples of war reportage. This book contains a host of voices that spell out the chaos and mayhem of America's longest war.

Mr. Speaker, it is a no-win situation. I'm a history major from college, but I'm not an expert on history. But in everything I have ever read about Afghanistan, the end is always the same. No nation has ever gone to Afghanistan and changed anything, nothing at all.

And, Mr. Speaker, speaking of mayhem, yesterday in The New York Times—and I will quote the article—the title of the article is "Top Afghans Tied to Nineties Carnage, Researchers Say: Activists Say Powerful Figures Are Blocking 800-Page Report" of carnage in the nineties by many of those that are leading Afghanistan today.

I don't know why there is not more outrage from Congress. Anytime we

have a debate about Afghanistan, it's a few Republicans and a few Democrats who stand up. And we might get 10 minutes, but that's about all. Ten minutes? We are spending \$10 billion a month; young men and women are losing their legs and arms. And 10 minutes is all we're going to debate the policy in Afghanistan? That, in itself, is crazy.

In this article, it further states:

The American Embassy here has been another source of objection to the mass-graves report. American officials say releasing the report would be a bad idea, at least until after Afghanistan's 2014 Presidential election is complete.

This has been a failed policy. It should have stopped after Mr. Obama got bin Laden. The reason we went into Afghanistan was to get bin Laden and al Qaeda which was responsible for 9/11. Well, he is dead now; al Qaeda has been disbursed all around the world. It is time to stop this failed policy in Afghanistan.

And I will say to the embassy that does not want this report out, Why? Why do you continue to play this game with the American young men and women who give their lives and limbs in Afghanistan? Why won't you be honest with the American people and Congress and say, Bring the troops home; stop spending money we don't have.

The money is actually borrowed from China, Mr. Speaker. We owe China \$1.3 trillion. We can't pay our own bills. Yet we're going to borrow the money from China to send to a corrupt leader named Karzai in Afghanistan. And, Mr. Speaker, the subtitle of this book, "How U.S. Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban"—it's the Taliban that are killing Americans.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform.

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my heartfelt sorrow and condolences to the victims and their families and the community of Aurora, Colorado, a great tragedy. Words are inadequate to describe it. And it's certainly a reminder to everyone that no time is promised to any of us. And we never know what will happen in the next second or the next minute or the next hour and certainly the next day. So we give praise that we were able to wake up this morning, come to the floor of the House and talk about an issue that is going to take a lot of time to heal.

But while we are healing, we have work to do in this Congress. You see, the assault weapons ban, in place for 10 years, expired in 2004. And after the expiration of the assault weapons ban, it's been open season.

Now, I know that there are people who hold the Second Amendment dear.

And it is established clearly in law that citizens have a right to bear arms. Beyond that, the Constitution is silent. So it leaves it up to us to address issues concerning the reasonable regulation of that right. Should we not have any regulations, or should we have regulations that are reasonable?

Now, I just heard some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle talking about the numerous bills that we will be considering this week having to do with stopping regulation in its tracks in all areas, whether or not it be child safety, food, drugs, car safety, whether or not it be air, water, food, drugs. I have heard talk that regulations stop jobs from being created. That is one that I disagree with; but nevertheless, we will be considering it today.

□ 1030

But there are some regulations governing the affairs of people that are reasonable, and that includes restrictions on who can bear arms and what kind of arms they can bear. To say that we should have no regulations on weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, to me is unwise. I don't understand why someone who has a gun in their home for protection needs to have a magazine that is capable of rapid fire, a hundred rounds in a couple of minutes or in a minute. I don't understand why someone needs that kind of firepower to protect their home.

I know people love to go hunting. I, myself, will one day have the opportunity to do that. I have never done it before, but I respect those who wait until hunting season begins on their particular prey of choice. They exercise that right and get a lot of joy and satisfaction out of it, and also bring home some food. I can't disagree with that, and we do need to cull our deer population and other populations. We have reasonable regulations on that. But you don't need an AK-47 to go deer hunting.

My 5 minutes went by very quickly, but I think you all understand what I'm saying.

HONORING PENNSYLVANIA STATE REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY MELIO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of Pennsylvania State Representative Anthony Melio, who passed away on Thursday afternoon. To his family, friends, and neighbors, he was known simply as "Tony," "Pop Pop," and "Uncle Tony." In the Pennsylvania State capitol, he was known as a hardworking and honorable State representative.

Having served his country in the Naval Reserves and working as one of the first employees in the United

States Steel Fairless Works in Bucks County, Tony's story is the story of my hometown of Levittown, Pennsylvania, a town of dignified and hardworking people.

Tony Melio was a man who built his political career on bringing the community together with his contagious smile and his warm personality. He embodied the spirit of public service during his time in Harrisburg. As the people's representative from Lower Bucks County, Tony carried out his duties with dignity and perseverance. His commitment to his family and his community were the hallmarks of his service.

A man of great faith, Bucks County has lost one of its most well-respected and beloved public servants in Tony Melio. I, like so many, had the privilege of calling Tony a friend and a neighbor, and my thoughts and prayers are with the Melio family in this difficult time.

I thank the United States House of Representatives for stopping to remember this dignified public servant this morning.

DEVELOP AMERICA'S ENERGY RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, President Obama continues to pursue an energy agenda that is contrary to his all-of-the-above rhetoric. There is no better example than his administration's recently released 5-year offshore leasing plan.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, the plan proposes a mere 15 lease sales over the next 5 years, which is the lowest number since 1980, when CRS began tracking that data. Instead of allowing the development of America's vast offshore oil and gas resources, the plan effectively imposes a moratorium on most development, a moratorium which Congress lifted nearly 4 years ago. The plan blocks drilling on 85 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf. Effectively, States which sought Federal approval will have to wait another 12 years before any production is possible.

Under current law, Congress has a 60-day review period to replace the President's plan. Last week, the House Natural Resources Committee passed H.R. 6082, a plan that will allow more development of our energy resources. Instead of a moratorium of a none-of-the-above energy policy, we should responsibly develop all of our resources for the long-term benefits of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve affordable and reliable energy.

PASS RUSSIA PNTR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss an issue which I hope we will be addressing in the coming days.

There is a great deal of confusion about the possibility of our passing PNTR for Russia. Some are laboring under the impression that this is a reward to Vladimir Putin and Russia; and, in fact, the opposite is the case. We know that Vladimir Putin—in fact, many people say they look at him and what they are reminded of is the KGB. We know that Vladimir Putin, according to many reports, is attempting to reassemble the former Soviet Union. We know that he has grossly violated human rights. We know that they have a massive bureaucracy, crony capitalism, and a very corrupt court system. That's why, Mr. Speaker, it is very important for us to make sure that we pass Russia PNTR.

According to The Wall Street Journal in an editorial last week, they made it clear, Vladimir Putin does not want to us to pass the Magnitsky Act, which is part of PNTR, and they go on to say that he probably would be just as happy if we did not have PNTR. Why? Because based on overwhelming votes that took place in the last 2 weeks in the Russian Parliament, in the Duma, the lower house, and the Federated Council, the upper house, overwhelming votes, Russia is going to become a member of the World Trade Organization. I personally believe that's a good thing. It will take a great step in the direction of forcing Russia to live with a rules-based trading system, to address those issues of crony capitalism, a corrupt court system, and a massive bureaucracy.

But, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I think it is important to note that we've seen action taken here in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, and we have seen a great deal of enthusiasm focused on the Magnitsky Act.

What is the Magnitsky Act? It is legislation that is named for Sergei Magnitsky, who was a whistleblower who focused on basically corruption that existed within the tax reporting system, basically, tax fraud. He reported on that, and he was imprisoned. He died in 2009. Mr. Speaker, what happened, very sadly, according to most reports, is that he was beaten to death.

Well, what does this legislation do? Something, again, Vladimir Putin would be virulently opposed to. It actually penalizes anyone who was involved in those human rights violations against Sergei Magnitsky. So, Mr. Speaker, this is a good thing. And at the same time in passing PNTR, we will say that the 140 million consumers in Russia will have access to goods and services from the United States of America.

Under the measure that has passed both houses of the Russian Parliament, as I said, overwhelming majorities, it will go into effect within the next couple or 3 weeks. What we need to do, Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize that the